

**What is claimed is:**

1. A bathing apparatus that is easy and safe for disabled bathers to enter, use and exit, comprising:  
  
a bathtub having an inside for receiving a bather for bathing, the inside comprising a floor, and a ramp adjacent to the floor;  
  
the ramp sloping to the floor to allow a bather to slide on the ramp relative to the floor;  
  
the ramp having a distal end with respect to the floor;  
  
a banister connected to the bathtub and extending from approximately the distal end of the ramp over a substantial length of the floor, the banister comprising a descending portion and a substantially level portion adjacent to the descending portion, the descending portion having a slope allowing a bather to slide from the descending portion to the lower portion; the level portion being substantially horizontal with respect to the vertical; the level portion having an upper surface and a length, the height of the upper surface from the floor and the length of the upper surface being suitable for a bather to sit on the upper surface.
2. The bathing apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a drain; the floor sloping towards the drain, allowing for faster drainage of any water on the floor.
3. The bathing apparatus of claim 1 wherein the banister is fixedly connected to the inside.
4. The bathing apparatus of claim 1 wherein the banister is hingedly connected to the inside.
5. The bathing apparatus of claim 1 further comprising an enlarged portion of the level portion extending at least in part out of the upper surface, for the purpose of providing support and leverage for the bather's limbs.
6. The bathing apparatus of claim 5 wherein the enlarged portion is located at the end of the upper surface farthest from the descending portion.
7. The bathing apparatus of claim 1 wherein the upper surface's height is less than the height of the inside, relative to the floor.
8. The bathing apparatus of claim 1 wherein the distance of the upper surface from the floor changes along the length of the level portion.

9. The bathing apparatus of claim 1 wherein at least part of the upper surface curves in the direction of the floor.
10. The bathing apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a ramp distal end, with respect to the floor, the ramp distal end being approximately the same height above ground level as a wheel chair seat.
11. The bathing apparatus of claim 1 further comprising extensions from the level portion, the extensions providing support to the limbs of the bather.
12. The bathing apparatus of claim 1 wherein the upper portion slopes less steeply to the lower portion than the ramp slopes to the floor.
13. A bathing apparatus comprising:
  - a bathtub having a bathtub inside for receiving a bather for bathing;
  - the inside comprising a floor, having a first end, and a ramp adjacent to the floor at the first end; the ramp having a distal end with respect to the floor; said ramp having a slope; said slope starting at about the ramp distal end and descending to the floor first end; said slope being suitable for safely sliding on the descending portion from the ramp distal end to the floor.
  - a banister coupled to the bathtub; said banister comprising a descending portion, with a descending portion upper end, and a descending portion lower end with respect to the floor; and a substantially level portion having a level portion proximal end with respect to the descending portion lower end; the level portion proximal end being adjacent to the lower end;
  - the descending portion descending from about the ramp distal end at a downward slope to the lower end; the downward slope being less than the slope of the ramp and suitable for sliding down the banister from the descending portion upper end to the level portion;
  - the level portion extending, substantially horizontally with respect to the vertical, from the descending portion lower end over the bathtub floor; the level portion having a length and a height suitable for sitting on the surface of the level portion.
14. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 wherein the bathtub is substantially circular.

15. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 wherein the bathtub is substantially pentagonal.
16. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 wherein the bathtub is substantially rectangular.
17. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 further comprising a drain; the floor sloping towards the drain, allowing for faster drainage of any water on the floor.
18. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 wherein the banister is fixedly coupled to the inside.
19. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 wherein the banister is hingedly coupled to the inside.
20. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 further comprising an upper surface of the level portion, a part of the level portion extending, at least in part out of the upper surface, in a curved manner forming an enlarged portion of the level portion.
21. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 further comprising an upper surface of the level portion, the upper surface comprising a height less than the height of the inside, relative to the floor.
22. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 further comprising an upper surface of the level portion, the distance of the upper surface from the floor varying along the length of the level portion.
23. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 further comprising an upper surface of the level portion, the upper surface curving concavely in the direction of the floor.
24. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 wherein the ramp distal end is approximately the same height above ground level as a wheel chair seat.
25. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 further comprising extensions from the level portion, the extensions providing support to the limbs of the bather.
26. The bathing apparatus of claim 13 wherein the descending portion arises out of the ramp by descending less quickly than the ramp.
27. A bathing apparatus that is easy and safe for disabled bathers to enter, use, and exit, comprising:  
  
walls and a floor defining a reservoir to receive water for bathing;  
  
the walls comprising an upper rim that is distal relative to the floor;

the walls further comprising a ramp, the ramp having an angle relative to horizontal to allow a bather to slide on the ramp in the direction of the floor;

the ramp and the floor comprising, as viewed from above relative to the floor, a region;

the region comprising a first subregion, a second subregion, and a third subregion; the first subregion and second subregion at least partly adjacent to each other and to the third region; the third subregion being between part of the first subregion and part of the second subregion;

the third subregion commencing at about the upper rim and extending substantially into the floor, as viewed from above;

the third subregion, as viewed from a side, having a height and a length relative to the first subregion and the second subregion;

the third subregion having a descending portion and a substantially level portion;

the descending portion extending from about the upper rim in the direction of the floor; the height of the descending portion gradually increasing as the descending portion extends from about the upper rim toward the floor to allow a bather to slide on the descending portion from the direction of the upper rim in the direction of the floor;

the substantially level portion having an upper surface relative to the floor, the height and length of the substantially level portion allowing a bather to sit on the upper surface with feet extending toward or resting on the floor.

28. An apparatus to assist bathing a patient, comprising:

a surface contoured to define at least in part sidewalls and a floor to a primary reservoir operable to receive water for bathing a patient;

a banister disposed between the sidewalls and over the floor of the primary reservoir;

the banister extending from a rear sidewall of the sidewalls and into the primary reservoir toward a front sidewall of the sidewalls, and standing between left and right sidewalls of the sidewalls to divide the primary reservoir into left and right sub-reservoir regions;

the banister, per a profile view, comprising:

a sloped portion that extends from the rear sidewall with a downward slope, and

a platform portion that extends further inwardly from the sloped portion, the platform to seat a patient within and above the floor of the primary reservoir.

29. The apparatus of claim 28, the banister further comprising:

a forward end portion to terminate the longitudinal length of the banister at an end thereof distal the rear sidewall,

the forward end portion comprising, per a top view, a width greater than a width of the sloped portion and greater than a width of the platform portion near the sloped portion.

30. The apparatus of claim 29, in which the forward end portion of the banister comprises a transition region that meets the platform region and transitions a slope of the banister upward.

31. The apparatus of claim 30, in which an upper surface of the platform region defines a profile that is substantially horizontal.

32. The apparatus of claim 30, in which the forward end portion defines part of a rounded termination for the pedestal.

33. The apparatus of claim 28, in which the banister further comprises means to support the slope portion and the platform portion relative to the floor of the primary reservoir.

34. The apparatus of claim 33, in which the floor comprises:

a portion that defines an opening to a drain disposed near the front sidewall; and

a descending surface that define a ramp that extends from a base of the rear sidewall, per a cross-sectional view, toward the drain.

35. The apparatus of claim 34, in which the left and right sub-reservoir regions are in communication with each other around the banister over the drain.

36. The apparatus of claim 35, the left and right sub-reservoir regions in further communication with each other via apertures through the support means.

37. The apparatus of claim 35, the banister contiguous with the sidewalls and the floor associated with the contoured surface that defines the primary reservoir.

38. The apparatus of claim 35, the banister removably attached to the contoured surface that defines the primary reservoir.

39. The apparatus of claim 28, in which
- the rear sidewall comprises:
- a base region that meets the floor for the primary reservoir, and
- an upper region at an elevation related to a depth for the primary reservoir; and
- the sloped portion of the banister meets the upper region of the rear sidewall.
40. The apparatus of claim 39, in which the sloped portion of the banister meets the upper region of the rear sidewall at an elevation above ground level.
41. The apparatus of claim 40, in which the elevation where the sloped portion meets the upper region of the rear sidewall is substantially equal to that for a seat to a wheel chair.